

Appln. No. 10/629,433
Amendment dated October 25, 2006
Reply to Final Office Action of September 7, 2006

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-15 (canceled)

Claim 16 (previously presented): A filter comprising first and second axially spaced end caps, said second end cap having an axial flow opening therethrough, filter media extending axially between said end caps and extending in a closed-loop around a perimeter defining a hollow interior communicating with said axial flow opening, wherein fluid to be filtered flows laterally

5 through said filter media and axially through said hollow interior and said axial flow opening, a pair of columns extending axially in said hollow interior between said end caps and laterally spaced from said axial flow opening on laterally distally opposite sides thereof and in non-circumscribing relation therewith, each column having a hollow sub-interior for receiving a respective post extending axially thereinto from a base for mounting the filter to the base, the
10 posts applying axial compression force between said end caps on laterally distally opposite sides of said axial flow opening, said columns supporting said axial compression force on laterally distally opposite sides of said axial flow opening, wherein a first of said columns comprises first and second sleeves extending respectively from said first and second end caps axially towards and engaging each other and supporting said axial compression force, and the
15 second of said columns comprises third and fourth sleeves extending respectively from said first and second end caps axially towards and engaging each other and supporting said axial compression force, wherein said first and second sleeves engage each other in axially overlapped telescoped non-threaded axially slidable relation, one of said first and second sleeves having a first annular sealing bead engaging the other of said first and second sleeves in
20 axially slidable sealing relation providing an axially slidable seal sealing said sub-interior of said first column within said first and second sleeves from said hollow interior of said filter

media to block contaminant flow therebetween, and wherein said third and fourth sleeves engage each other in axially overlapped telescoped non-threaded axially slid able relation, one of said third and fourth sleeves having a second annular sealing bead engaging the other of said
25 third and fourth sleeves in axially slid able sealing relation providing an axially slid able seal sealing said sub-interior of said second column within said third and fourth sleeves from said interior of said filter media to block contaminant flow therebetween, wherein said filter media has an axial height between said first and second axial ends at respective said first and second end caps, and wherein each of said first, second, third and fourth sleeves has an axial height less
30 than said axial height of said filter media.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The filter according to claim 16 wherein said one of said first and second sleeves has a first stop engaging the other of said first and second sleeves and stopping axial travel of said first and second sleeves toward each other, to provide said first column support for said axial compression force, and wherein one of said third and fourth sleeves has a second stop engaging the other of said third and fourth sleeves and stopping axial travel of said third and fourth sleeves toward each other, to provide said second column support for said axial compression force, wherein said first stop engaging said other of said first and second sleeves is spaced axially between said first and second axial ends of said filter media, and said second stop engaging said other of said third and fourth sleeves is spaced axially
5 between said first and second axial ends of said filter media.
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Claim 18 (previously presented): The filter according to claim 16 wherein said hollow interior of said filter media and said axial flow opening in said second end cap are in axial alignment, and wherein said posts are laterally spaced from said axial flow opening and axially non-aligned therewith and offset therefrom.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The filter according to claim 16 comprising a pair of seals, each provided by a respective annular sealing bead around a respective said sleeve at a respective one of said columns and sealing the respective said sub-interior of the respective said column from said interior of said filter media to block contaminant flow therebetween, a first of 5 said seals being between said first and second sleeves, a second of said seals being between said third and fourth sleeves, wherein each of said first and second seals is laterally spaced from said axial flow opening in non-circumscribing relation, and wherein said first and second seals are laterally spaced from each other on laterally distally opposite sides of said axial flow opening.

Claim 20 (previously presented): The filter according to claim 16 wherein said hollow interior of said filter media and said axial flow opening in said second end cap are in axial alignment, and wherein a first of said posts is laterally spaced from said axial flow opening and axially non-aligned therewith and offset therefrom, and a second of said posts is laterally spaced from 5 said axial flow opening and axially non-aligned therewith and offset therefrom and also laterally spaced from said first post and axially non-aligned therewith and offset therefrom.